

# **Kentucky Environmental Education Council**

**Winter Meeting January 23rd, 2008**

**Berry Hill Mansion**

**Frankfort, KY**

## **Minutes of the Meeting**

**Members Present:** Allen Branscum, Horace Brown, Jim Funk, Greg Higdon, Kurt Mason, Evelyn Morgan, Marc Norton, Bob Roquemore

**Members not present:** Cheryl Messenger

**Staff:** Jane Eller, Julie Gee, John LeFevre, Yvonne Meichtry, Maria Zoretic

Mr. Brown, the Council Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including new members Marc Norton and Bob Roquemore. Since there was a quorum, Mr. Mason made a motion to approve the winter meeting minutes. Mr. Higdon seconded the motion and all Council members were in favor.

**Election of Officers** – Mr. Higdon made a motion for Horace Brown to be the Council Chair. Mr. Roquemore seconded the motion and all Council members were in favor. Mr. Brown made a motion for Evelyn Morgan to be Vice Chair and all Council members were in favor.

**Council Member Update** – Mr. Mason informed members that after 15 years of service, he will be stepping down as a part of the Council. Mr. Brown and Ms. Eller thanked Mr. Mason for his vital and unselfish service to the Council and the Commonwealth.

**Budget Cuts** – Ms. Eller informed Council members that, along with the rest of the state government, the agency budget had been cut by 6% or \$84,100 in the current fiscal year ending on June 30, 2008. The reason for the large amount was that the Pride fund dollars, as well as grants to the agency, were used to figure the 6%. In order to come up with the funds needed for the required budget cuts, the agency lowered the amount of money that each of the state universities was to receive from the Pride fund by \$8,000. This totaled \$64,000. To make up for the remainder of the funds needed, the agency used \$20,000 of its set aside funds (leaving that fund empty) originally set aside for the 2009 Environmental Literacy Survey.

**Use of FY 08-09 Pride funds** – Ms. Eller asked the Council to consider the budget situation of the agency. The \$150,000 we receive from fines and penalties now covers the salaries and benefits of the Executive Director and Administrative Specialist of the agency with only about \$13,000 remaining for operating expenses and programmatic funds. Since this year's state budget, once again, seems to preclude any new funding, she feels the only way for the agency to survive is to use more of the interest from the Pride

funds. Council members discussed this in depth and agreed that, since the Council staff members were also engaged in many of the activities cited in the higher education portion of the master plan, the use of the funds was justified. Ms. Eller said she would present a plan for next year's budget at the April meeting.

**Greens Schools Legislation** – Ms Eller explained that she had been asked by Senator Katie Stein to help write legislation that would provide incentives for school districts to build green schools. She said she had apprized Secretary Mountjoy of this and was working with all parties. She said she had also been working with staff members from the Finance Cabinet who are looking into ways to “green” the operations of state government buildings and fleets. The Council's Green Design manual has been used as an example in these efforts.

**Certification** – Ms. Eller informed Council members that a new certification class is ready to begin. This year's class will have about 15 participants and will be our fifth class. At the end of February we will have certified nearly 100 non formal environmental educators in the Commonwealth.

**Storm Water Education** – Dr. Yvonne Meichtry and Ms. Julie Gee who are working on the MS4 program with the Transportation Cabinet reviewed their activities to date on the project. Since beginning work on the project in September, they have met with officials from 40 some communities and interviewed them with respect to what they are currently doing in storm water education and what they would like to do. Based on their findings, they are planning to create toolkits of educational materials designed for various audiences. Dr. Meichtry and Ms. Gee will provide each community with a toolkit and train local officials to use the material. We do not yet know if the program will be funded for next year.

**Green & Healthy Schools** – Ms. Zoretic informed Council members that there were now 36 schools participating in the Green and Healthy Schools Program. She also informed members that State Farm Insurance Company provided the agency with \$5,000 to purchase awards for the schools and that we are also approaching Toyota and Lowes for support.

Sheltowee School - Eller told the Council she is working on a new project with a group from Lexington including several teachers and a child psychiatrist. They plan to open a school for kids with behavior disorders that will use a green curriculum to both teach the kids and provide therapeutic support. As far as we know this is the first of its kind in the U.S.

**Closeout of Upper Cumberland** - Mr. LeFevre discussed the Upper Cumberland Project which he has managed over the past year. The program was designed to use social marketing techniques to spread the word about nonpoint source pollution. This project was subcontracted to the Department of Communications at ECU and the students managed the actual program. Mr. LeFevre explained that the program was a success and that all reports and paperwork are complete.